

When Christian's are in Willful Sin, Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 5:3-5 – October 26th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part two of a series we began last week, titled, "When Christian's are in Willful Sin."
- By way of introduction, I think it's incumbent upon me to warn you that the chapter before us deals with delicate and mature subject matter.
- Namely, that of sexual immorality, even incest, within the carnal church of Corinth, which is why Paul is forced to deal with it ever so bluntly.

1. Confront Them (Verses 1-2)

- v1 Paul says there's sexual immorality among them; it's of a kind that even pagans don't tolerate. A man is sleeping with his father's wife.
- v2 He says they are proud when instead they should have gone into mourning and put out of their church the man who has been doing this.

2. Remove Them (Verses 3-5)

3 For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. 4 So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

- v3 Paul says even though he's not physically present, he's with them in spirit and has already passed judgment on the one who's doing this.
- v4 He goes on to say that when they're assembled together he will be with them in spirit, and the power of the Lord Jesus will be present.
- v5 The reason for this is to hand him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

- It's important to understand that the severity with which the Apostle Paul is passing judgment does not apply to those struggling with sin.
- By that I mean, Christians who struggle with or occasionally fall then repent and forsake their sin, will find God's mercy instead of judgment.
- Conversely, those who knowingly and willfully sin and don't repent or forsake their sin find themselves on the receiving end of this judgment.

- Perhaps an explanation and delineation between willful or intentional and unintentional sin would be helpful in better understanding this.
- In order to do that I'll kindly ask that you turn in your Bibles to the Old Testament book of Numbers, the fifteenth chapter and verses 27-31.
- I would suggest Paul passing judgment on and dealing harshly with this unnamed and unrepentant man is in obedience to this passage.

Numbers 15:27-31 'And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. 28 So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the LORD, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 29 You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, for him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them. 30 'But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him."

- Notice first how that the Lord provides a way to sacrifice an offering and receive forgiveness for sins that are committed "unintentionally."
- Notice also how that the Lord offers no such provision for intentional sin, such that no offering can be made for forgiveness to be received.
- Instead, the one who sins presumptuously, or intentionally, if you prefer, is to be completely cut off from among his people because of it.

- This begs the question of why? Why are they to be completely cut off, or like the man in our text today, kicked out and given over to Satan?
- For that answer, I need to explain the original language of Hebrew for defiantly sinning with a "high hand" as some translations render it.
- To sin with a "high hand," carries with it the idea of shaking one's fist in a rebellious and even blasphemous way at, and against the Lord.

- In other words, this man committing sexual sin with his stepmother in the Corinthian church was doing so both rebelliously and defiantly.
- As such, the Apostle Paul out of obedience to the Word of God here in the book of Numbers, tells them to cut him off, and kick him out.
- Be that as it may, I'm taking the time to explain the difference between willful or intentional and unintentional sin to answer some questions.

- More specifically, questions such as, if someone is divorced for reasons other than adultery, and marry other people, are they in willful sin?
- While there are no cookie cutter answers to this given the vast array of circumstances surrounding divorce, it is "NOT" the unforgivable sin.
- Sadly, the church today has erred greatly in dealing with the devastation of divorce, unnecessarily heaping condemnation on the divorced.

- Yes, while God does hate divorce, that doesn't mean God hates the divorced. He hates divorce because of what it does to the divorced.
- It's for this reason I'm of the strong conviction that someone who has been divorced and remarries is not living in willful and intentional sin.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that if they are remarried, they have in fact entered into another covenant of marriage in which to keep.

- So what about the question of an unmarried couple that is living together and having sex in willful sin? The simple answer is absolutely.
- The reason being is that sex before marriage is clearly an intentional sin by virtue of the Word of God forbidding it as the sin of fornication.
- So too is this true with sex outside of marriage clearly being an intentional sin by virtue of God's Word forbidding it as the sin of adultery.

- Let me give you a litmus test of sorts by which to know whether one is living in willful and intentional sin, or committing unintentional sin.
- If it's done deliberately, knowingly and even defiantly then it's clearly an intentional sin, which needs to be dealt with seriously and severely.
- It's unintentional when it's not deliberate or defiant and there's godly sorrow leading to repentance and not worldly sorrow leading to death.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 (NIV) — 9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

- By the way, Paul was hoping this man would come to a godly sorry that in turn would bring about his repentance and not lead to his death.
- Paul knew by the Holy Spirit that it would take handing this man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh in order to accomplish this.
- I'll close with this question, is there someone in your life that you need to deal with in this manner, or could it be that, that someone is you?